

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

COME-00 MCT-01 HA-05 TRSE-00 /067 W

-----035299 251844Z /40

R 250318Z FEB 78

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2187

INFO CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 3108

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, SHUM, RP

SUBJECT: MILITARY LIFTS CURFEW IN MINDANAO

1. SOUTHERN COMMAND CHIEF RADM ESPALDON ANNOUNCED FEBRUARY 24 HE HAS ORDERED MIDNIGHT-TO-4:00 A.M. CURFEW LIFTED IN 13 PROVINCES OF WESTERN MINDANAO, EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY. HE SAID THE MOVE WAS RECOMMENDED BY MILITARY COMMANDERS OF REGIONS IX (ZAMBOANGA) AND XII (COTABATO) AND APPROVED BY PRESIDENT MARCOS BECAUSE THE PRESENT "POLICE ACTION" IN THE SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES HAS IMPROVED THE PEACE AND ORDER SITUATION IN THESE AREAS.

2. THE 13 AFFECTED PROVINCES, ACCORDING TO DAILY EXPRESS, ARE: ZAMBOANGA DEL SUR, ZAMBOANGA DEL NORTE, BASILAN, TAWI-TAWI, SULU, MAGUINDANAO, SULTAN KUDARAT, SOUTH COTABATO, NORTH COTABATO, LANA DEL SUR, LANA DEL NORTE, DAVAL DEL SUR AND PALAWAN. (NOTE: THESE ARE THE 13 PROVINCES COVERED BY THE "AUTONOMY" AGREEMENT WITH THE MORO NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT OF DECEMBER 1976) TIMES JOURNAL AND BULLETIN TODAY REPORT CURFEW WAS LIFTED "THROUGHOUT MINDANAO."

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3. ESPALDON CITED INCREASED TOURISM TO THE SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES, PARTICULARLY TO ZAMBOANGA CITY, AS "THE BEST YARDSTICK OF NORMALCY" OF THE AREA. HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES HAVE BEEN ORDERED TO BE "MORE ALERT AND ACTIVE" TO GUARD AGAINST AN UPSURGE OF "CRIMINALITY." "I HOPE THE LIFTING OF CURFEW WILL

CONTINUE," HE SAID, "AND THAT NO UNTOWARD INCIDENT WILL  
WARRANT ITS REIMPOSITION."

4. COMMENT: PRESIDENT MARCOS ORDERED THE COUNTRYWIDE  
MARTIAL LAW CURFEW LIFTED LAST AUGUST AS A GESTURE TOWARD  
IMPROVING THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION. IT WAS RETAINED  
SELECTIVELY, HOWEVER, IN AREAS OF ACTIVE INSURGENCY IN  
MINDANAO AND ELSEWHERE. EMBOFFS WHO VISITED SOUTHERN AND  
WESTERN MINDANAO EARLIER THIS MONTH REPORTED THAT THE  
INSURGENCY SITUATION THERE IS AS BAD AS EVER (MANILA 2759).  
THE ONLY NEW ELEMENT IN THE SITUATION, SO FAR AS WE ARE  
AWARE, IS THE GOVERNMENT'S VIGOROUS CAMPAIGN FOR A STRONG  
SHOWING IN THE INTERIM BATASANG PAMBANSA ELECTIONS  
SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 7. THE LIFTING OF CURFEW IN THESE  
AREAS APPEARS TO BE A WELCOME RELAXATION OF AN ARBITRARY  
RULE ENFORCED IN SECURE AS WELL AS INSECURE AREAS OF  
THE SOUTH.  
STULL

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## Message Attributes

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**Review Markings:**  
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